The A. F. of L. Weekly News Service gives news accounts and editorial interpretations of matters affecting labor concerning in the industrial, legislative, and judicial fields, and contains other information of benefit to the trade union movement.

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR

WEEKLY NEWS SERVICE

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WHOLE NO. 1583 WILLIAM GREEN, President WASHINGTON, D. C., TUESDAY, AUGUST 12, 1941 GEORGE MEANY, Secretary-Treasurer VOL. 31, NO. 32

FACING the FACTS

With PHILIP PEARL

We would like to chat this week about two declarations issued by the Executive Council of the American Federation of Labor at its Chicago meeting which are of supreme importance to the present and future welfare of American workers and of the nation in the economic sense.

The first and immediate national problem considered by the council was the high cost of living and the danger of even greater inflation of prices unless something is done about it. In fact, the council decided something must be done about it.

In studying this question, the council gave special attention to the message sent by President Roosevelt to Congress asking for authority to control prices and rents. In this message, the President emphasized the fundamental truth that inflation hits the workers more than anyone else. Each time the price of food and rent goes up, each time the landlord hikes the rent, the worker gets what is equivalent to a pay cut. The few dollars he earns buy less. He and his family are forced to do without and the chances of putting by a penny for a rainy day fade. Of course, wages are rising along with prices, but the trouble with these pay increases is the same as the trouble with Franco's defense preparations—"too little, too late."

Acting, therefore, in the best interests of the workers, the council gave its approval to the enactment of price control legislation.

Dangers of Federal Control

But—and this is a big but—the council recognized serious dangers are involved in giving any Federal agency the power to fix prices. Federal control, such broad powers. For one thing, there unquestionably will be a move made by reactionary groups to have the power over wage increases as well as price increases. This is unthinkable to organized labor and, in fact, the President specifically exempted wages from the scope of the price control plan in his message. That won't stop some of the anti-labor members of Congress, however, from whooping up a loud campaign for including wage regulation in the law and labor will have to be closely on its guard to block any such move. Government-regulated wages would be fatal to free labor and would transform our country from a democracy to a Fascist State overnight.

There is another danger that Federal control of prices may lead to Government control of business. This, too, would be harmful to labor. The workers of our country have a stake in the American system of free enterprise and they know that there can be no free labor without free business. There can be no free labor. If everyone were working for the Government, labor would find all its present freedoms gone, just as the workers in totalitarian countries lost theirs.

Bearing all this in mind, the Executive Council called upon Congress to hedge the grant of price control powers in a way which will avoid such dangers. Everyone sees the need of preventing inflation. Even business itself is anxious for some form of price control because it would be impossible to carry on business without it. Manufacturers would hesitate to make any commitments if they couldn't tell in advance within reasonable limits how much their materials would cost them and how much they could expect to get for their product. But any price control agency must be given the power to grant temporary security and stabilization for eventual Government control of industry.

Prepare Now For Peace

Having thus dealt constructively with an immediately pressing problem, the council then turned its attention to economic dangers that lie ahead. It discovered and warned that a depression, even worse than the last one, is heading our way at hurricane speed. All the signs point to it. Millions of workers are now engaged in defense production. Many new factories have been built for war purposes. A million young men have been taken out of the labor market and inducted into the Army and Navy. All of this is very necessary and conditions are booming as a result. But just think of what is bound to happen when the defense program is completed. When war ends suddenly—tomorrow, next year or three years from now. Who knows or can tell in advance when that will happen. Suppose Hitler is crushed and the totalitarian drive against the remainder of democracy in the world collapses. We all want that to happen and happen quickly. But what effect will it have on our economy? Overnight, practically, there will be the thing we know half the factories in the country, now working on defense orders will close down. Millions of workers will lose their jobs. The boys now in the Army will be let out and be forced to join another Army—the Army of unemployed. Money will become tight. Farmers will suffer from the curtailment of markets. Unless something is done to prevent it, we will be sunk in the worst depression in the history of the country. Hunger will breed discontent and become a new threat to American democracy.

Therefore, the council urged President Roosevelt and Congress to start preparing for peace now with the same energy and foresight that America is devoting to the defense program. It can be done and it must be done. The council asked the President to appoint a Federal agency representative of business, labor, agriculture and the Government to draft a program for expansion of peace production the moment the war threat ends. New industries can be made ready and all aid to defense ended. The council took this action in the hope a great forward step in recommending this plan and it is to be hoped that the President will not delay in acting upon it.

AFL Council Urges Planning Agency To Prevent Post-War Depression

Chicago, Ill.—The immediate establishment of a long-term planning agency, representative of all branches of Government, industry, labor and agriculture, to develop a broad program to provide employment for millions of workers scheduled for dismissal from national defense industries with the advent of peace was recommended by the Executive Council of the American Federation of Labor at its summer meeting here.

"American industry is now running in high gear on defense orders," the Executive Council's statement said. "Peace, when it comes, will halt this huge industrial machine in its tracks. Thousands of factories and munitions plants now operating twenty-four hours a day will be forced to close. Millions of workers will lose their jobs. Farmers will suffer from curtailment of markets and purchasing power. Depression will set in and our economic system may not be able to withstand the shock.

"This is the inevitable prospect for America unless we begin to prepare for peace while we are speeding up our defense against the threat of war.

"The Executive Council believes that industrial production can not only be maintained at its present high level after the defense emergency, but can and should be expanded. But this will require creative planning and the closest cooperation of Government, industry, labor and agriculture.

"The first step must be to set up a planning agency in which each of these branches of our economic system will be fully represented. This agency, functioning at once, should draw up a program by which American resourcefulness can be teamed with American resources to accomplish the rapid shift from war production to peace production when the time comes.

"The Executive Council feels confident that American resourcefulness can be mobilized for peace needs as well as for defense emergencies. The genius and invention of our scientific laboratories can devise demand in new industries to meet the wants of our people. Many new uses, such as television and air-conditioning, are even now ready for tremendous expansion. Many existing markets, such as home construction, are waiting to be filled. In the agricultural field, we have only begun to realize that farm production can be utilized not only for food but for industrial necessary materials for industrial use.

"These are just a few of the more obvious fields which offer a program for America's future economy can be directed with careful preparation. There is no danger that we will have enough to do to keep our workers and farmers and factories busy and prosperous. The real danger is that we won't be ready to act when the time for action begins. The Executive Council, therefore, recommends that President Roosevelt that he take the lead by inviting representatives of industry, labor and agriculture to meet with Government representatives for the purpose of laying the groundwork for a peace production program."

Detroit Street Railway Union Wins $950,000 Annual Wage Boost Award

Detroit, Mich.—The operating employes of the Detroit & Michigan Street Railways, through Division 26 of the Amalgamated Association of Street, Electric Railway and Motor Coach Employes of America, AFL affiliate, obtained an award by a board of arbitration that raises their hourly rate to the highest level in the street railway and bus industry in the United States.

The award provides for an increase that the increase in wages and conditions to the operators alone under the award will amount to about $950,000 annually.

Green Stresses Labor's Support Of the National Defense Program

Chicago, Ill.—Through the skillful toil and loyal support of American workers, the national defense program is now proceeding full blast, ahead of schedule and against all expectations," President William Green of the American Federation of Labor told a nation-wide radio audience.

Citing official reports given to him by Federal defense agencies, Mr. Green revealed that the Army and Navy construction programs and aircraft production figures are away ahead of advance estimates and schedules.

"All of this is good news for America and bad news for America's enemies. It is a tribute to the efficiency of American labor and American industry working in close cooperation with each other.

Mr. Green gave several outstanding examples of assistance given to the defense program by the American Federation of Labor and its affiliates. Beginning with the unanimous pledge of support given by the last convention of the Federation, he traced the various steps taken to make good that pledge. Included were the no-strike pledge of the American Federation of Labor, the stabilization plan entered into by the Metal Trades Department and Building and Construction Trades Department in their respective fields, the Executive Council's recommendation for the creation of the National Defense Mediation Board and the sending of hundreds of thousands of skilled workers to the site of defense projects by A. F. of L. unions at no expense to the Government.

Figures received from the War and Navy Departments and the Office of Production Management, Mr. Green disclosed, show that more than 99 per cent of the 9½ million members of the A. F. of L. "have refrained from striking for any cause."

War Department records listed 56,483,400 man days worked in the Army construction program as against only 42,700 man days lost through strikes. On a percentage basis, this means only one-tenth of one per cent of working time was lost by strikes.

The Navy reported the following report of Undersecretary of War Robert P. Patterson:

"I am happy to inform you that the Army construction program, in spite of some confusion at the start due to the emergency nature of the program was thrust upon us, and in spite of the necessity for prosecuting it through winter weather, has progressed to the general satisfaction of the Army.

"The troop housing program was accomplished in time to meet the scheduled arrival of troops and the munitions plant program has been prosecuted with such speed that some of the plants are already in production.

"In the Army construction program we have had excellent cooperation from labor and the few strikes delay has been occasioned by labor troubles during the entire program. As you well know, there have been minor differences which have been quickly ironed out through the cooperative efforts of the labor organizations and the support of the individual workers.

"The patriotism done by labor organizations in furnishing us with skilled labor in regions where there was a dearth of labor is greatly appreciated."

Mr. Green then quoted the following report from Secretary of the Navy Knox:

"I have never seen a higher morale among shipbuilding workers. Construction is going at top speed in every yard in the Atlantic, Pacific and the Gulf. They are away ahead of schedule—about a year ahead."

Although Government regulations have now clamped the lid down on aircraft production figures, the latest totals made public were also highly encouraging, Mr. Green said. June production broke all records and the OPM reports that the production of two-engine bombers was almost doubled in the first months of this year.

Pointing out such problems as lack of defense housing and the high rate of industrial accidents in defense plants still have to be solved, Mr. Green concluded:

"Despite such hardships and many more difficulties too numerous to mention, the men and women of the American Federation of Labor have rallied to their nation's defense and have accomplished miracles of production. I wish to declare that many of them for the fine spirit they have shown and I wish to thank their union organizations for the wise leadership they have displayed.

"It is my profound conviction that this army of loyal workers will now go on to even greater accomplishments. Any democratic people who will undertake the job of making our country safe for democracy will not fail in the task."

15,000 Cheer Hutcheson and Green At Carpenters 60th Anniversary

Chicago, Ill.—More than 15,000 persons packed their way into Soldiers Field, Chicago Stadium to commemorate the sixtieth anniversary of the founding of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America and to celebrate the great achievements of that union for the workers since its birth.

Despite the oppressive heat, the crowd cheered enthusiastically as addresses by International President William L. Hutcheson and President Harry Bates of the Building Trades Department of Labor which were broadcast over a nation-wide hookup. The ceremonies also included introduction of the members of the A. F. of L. Executive Council, which held its summer meeting in Chicago this year especially to participate in the celebration and a review of the history of the union by International Secretary-Treasurer Frank Duffy of the Carpenters.

In his brief talk, Mr. Hutcheson traced the growth of the union from a membership of 2,000 in 1881 to a total of more than 300,000 today. During that period the wage rate of carpenters was lifted by the union from 20 cents an hour to from $1.25 to $1.75 an hour. Working hours were sharply reduced and conditions generally have been greatly improved since the days when the original eleven locals of the Brotherhood decided in 1881 that progress could only be attained by the formation of a national organization.

Mr. Hutcheson recalled that the Carpenters were among the original founders of the American Federation of Labor and contributed generously to its tremendous development. The Carpenters' union, he said, is now represent A. F. of L. affiliates to establish themselves on a strong basis, he pointed out.

Mr. Green paid tribute to the able leadership of Mr. Hutcheson during its foundation. He declared that officers of the union were responsible for the idea of making Labor Day a national holiday and also led in the campaign for the eight-hour day.

Mr. Green also complimented the organization on its loyalty and patriotism. Referring to the defense emergency, he emphasized that today all of labor must enlist in the cause of safeguarding our democracy and wiping out the threat of totalitarianism.

Praising the record of the Carpenters and the American Federation of Labor as a whole during the defense program, Mr. Green declared there is no justification for reactionary attempts to interfere with the defense legislation. He predicted that free labor will succeed in making America safe against any aggressor.

$600,000,000 For Defense Housing Urged by A.F.L. Executive Council

Chicago, Ill.—The Executive Council of the American Federation of Labor, in session here, advocated a $600,000,000 appropriation by Congress to take care of workers in defense areas. Congress is now considering a $150,000,000 appropriation bill for the purpose, but the Executive Council said this amount is far below the existing deplorable housing conditions.

"Through a nation-wide network of local housing committees," the Executive Council's statement said, "the American Federation of Labor has made a thorough canvass of the housing facilities afforded defense workers. This survey reveals appalling conditions. In many communities two and three families are bunking in one bed, working in shifts. In some cities of some defense projects no beds are available for the workers. They live in tents, shacks, over-crowded boarding houses and trailer camps. There are even instances of workers sleeping in their clothes in the parks because no shelter had been provided for them.

"It is impossible to realize that defense housing is no less vital than an adequate supply of aluminum, of electric power or of machine tools. Defense production taxes the full energies and skill of the worker. When a man works a full shift and overtime on shipbuilding or aircraft assembly, or runs a machine tool, he puts into his job all he has got. When he comes home he is dog-tired and needs proper food in order to be fresh and alert for the next day's work. That is why it is necessary to provide adequate, healthful, comfortable housing facilities for him and his family.

"There is so great a shortage of even moderately decent housing for defense workers that the estimated $150,000 new units is the irreducible minimum. In order to construct these units, Government financing is necessary. That is recognized and admitted. But no Federal appropriation is going to proceed to do this job it should do it right. That is why the Executive Council again strongly recommends that Congress provide a 600 million dollar appropriation for this indispensable program."

News Briefs

STATE JOB SERVICES FIND WORK FOR 2,500,000

Washington, D. C.—Federal Security Administrator Paul V. McNutt announced that approximately 2.5 million jobs had been filled by the State employment services during the first 6 months of 1941—a gain of 9 per cent over the same period of 1940.

Unemployment compensation benefit payments totaled nearly $250.5 million, approximately the same as in May, but 40 per cent less than in June 1940. Approximately 784,000 workers received one or more payments during the month in contrast to 1.4 million workers in June, 1940.

During June, 1.6 million workers filed applications for work with the State employment offices. At the end of the month there were 5.1 million job seekers registered in State employment offices throughout the country, virtually the same total as at the end of May.

SEATTLE TEAMSTERS OPEN BUY-DEFENSE-BONDS DRIVE

Seattle, Wash.—Designed as one of their many endeavors in the national defense program, the Joint Council of Teamsters No. 28 have pledged to purchase by the first of next year, $100,000 worth of defense bonds, Secretary-Treasurer Scott Hall participate in the purchase.

The Seattle Teamsters Local 174 have already purchased $20,000 in defense bonds starting the drive-ball rolling. Eleven other local unions in the Teamsters' Building have pledged $36,000 while the remainder will be raised by out-of-town locals.

PENNSYLVANIA JOB UNIT FINDS WORK FOR 133,000

Harrisburg, Pa.—State Employment Service of Pennsylvania placed 5,000 jobs in the week ending July 25, bringing the placement total this year to 133,000, Secretary of Labor and Industry Lewis G. Hines reported.

Also insurance payments registered an eleven per cent increase, with $267,000 disbursed to "qualified jobless workers" in the week ending July 26. New benefit claims dropped seven per cent, numbering 4,000. Benefit payments in 1941 now total close to $17,000,000 with an average check of $11.07.

KNOXVILLE UNIONS GAIN PAY INCREASE CONTRACTS

Knoxville, Tenn.—Union painters and teamsters here obtained agreements carrying significant wage increase. The painters' contract with the Libbey Owens Ford Glass Company and the Pittsburgh Plate Glass Company carried increases in pay ranging from 5 cents to 20 cents an hour. The agreement with City Manager Carpenter also provides that the Truck Drivers and Common Laborers unions included an increase in pay of 5 cents an hour for employes in these two groups.

INTERNATIONAL LABOR UNIT TO MEET IN NEW YORK CITY

Washington, D. C.—Despite the war which engulfs such a large part of the world, the International Labor Conference, or parliament of countries which are members of the International Labor Organization, will meet this year. Governments, workers and employers from various nations throughout the world will be represented at the conference here. International Labor Organization when it convened in New York City on October 27, 1941, the International Labor Office announced through Director John G. Winant.

The meeting will afford the Member States and their employers' and workers' organizations an opportunity for a general discussion of world social developments since the last International Labor Office, its present activities, and the part it may be called upon to play in the planning of a new world after the war.

SENATOR ASKS EMPLOYMENT FOR WORKERS 45 TO 65

Washington, D. C.—Senator Haydon of Arizona started a movement to secure more employment for persons between the ages of 45 and 65. As a result of petitions sent to him by Mrs. Arizona Clifton Norrell, Haydon wrote to John F. Carmody, administrator of the Federal Works Agency, urging that contractors on government defense projects or other public works should be required to give more consideration to older men seeking employment instead of giving preference to younger men.

Mr. Carmody admitted the justice of the plea but said that classes becoming older workers could not be properly included in government contracts, but with the permission of Senator Hayden he sent copies of the correspondence to a large number of contractors, the Office of Production Management, and all construction agencies of the Federal Works Agency.

AFL Executive Council Sees No Need For Sending U. S. Troops to Europe

Aid To Russia Approved, But Soviet Alliance With America Held "Unthinkable"—Urges Laws to Check Inflation

Chicago, Ill.—There is no present justification for the sending of an American expeditionary force to the European war zone nor is it the intention of the Government to do so, the Executive Council of the American Federation of Labor declared at its mid-summer session here.

The Council termed an American alliance with Soviet Russia "unthinkable," but because Russia is now fighting Nazi Germany, which constitutes the chief threat to the safety of this country, the council deemed it expedient to extend "such assistance as we can" to the Russian forces.

The statement on foreign policy highlighted the council meeting which also brought forth important declarations on many other pressing problems. A summary of these follows:

1—Warning against the dangers of inflation to the workers, the Council approved the recommendations of President Roosevelt for legislation to control advances in prices and the cost of living but it urged Congress to hedge the grant of new powers within clearly defined limits to prevent complete Federal regulation of industry.

2—Anticipating a tragic depression after the defense emergency unless steps are taken now to forestall it, the Council asked President Roosevelt to name a committee on which labor, industry, agriculture and the Government would be represented, to draft a program for the prompt expansion of peace production to be put into operation the moment defense orders cease.

3—Urgent demands for the authorization by Congress of an immediate $2 billion dollar defense housing program to alleviate the "shocking and intolerable" conditions under which thousands of defense workers are now forced to live.

In its statement on foreign policy, the Council said in part:

"The Executive Council fears that the change in the war picture may give rise to a tendency among some enthusiasts to clasp the hand of Soviet Russia as a friend and ally in the defense of democracy. Already the Communists in this country are trying to propel America into a close alliance with Soviet Russia. This is unthinkable. The teachings and practices of Communism are just as noxious and unprincipled as the teachings and practices of Nazism. Soviet Russia put out the willing hand of the forces of democracy in this war. She was forced into the war and her present friendly gestures to Great Britain and America are dictated by desperation and hypocrisy. The Communists are pretending to be the friends of democracy because they need the help of democratic nations. America, however, Communism is a form of tyranny warring which is inimical to democracy.

"With this much understood, our nation can proceed to weigh the question of whether and to what extent we should render aid to Soviet Russia. Frankly, even though we may regard the Communist regime in Russia as the enemy of democracy, we cannot escape the fact that Russia is now also the enemy of Nazi Germany. Our whole defense program is based upon the threat of aggression from Nazi Germany. Therefore, the defeat of Nazi Germany or even delay the Nazi program of world domination, America would gain thereby. Practical considerations consequently make it expedient that we render such assistance as we can to help Soviet Russia fight the Nazi war machine.

"Our Government should do this for practical reasons alone and without the slightest pretense that the United States and Soviet Russia are friends or can be friends. At the same time, our Government should guard against the possibility that closer ties with Soviet Russia may give her agents and adherents in this country wider opportunities to undermine American democracy from within.

"The war is involving America in increasingly complex situations and unless we adhere to straight courses and adhere closely to our principles and proceed step by step we may find ourselves confronting dangers even greater than we have as yet encountered.

"American occupation of Iceland came somewhat as a surprise but the necessity of taking this action to strengthen the defenses of the United States and to protect the shipment of munitions to Great Britain was clear to all. This defense move cannot in any sense be considered equivalent to the sending of an expeditionary force into the war zone. The Executive Council does not believe that present conditions justify or require the shipment of American troops to the scene of battle in Europe nor does it believe that it is the intention of the Government to do so."

A. F. OF L. URGES PRICE BOOST CURB

Chicago, Ill.—Definite action to check price inflation was recommended by the Executive Council of the American Federation of Labor at its summer session here.

Pointing out that "the national defense emergency has already brought the cost of living to a dangerous degree," food prices having risen 19 per cent in the past year, with rents increased and wholesale prices soaring upward from 13 to 17 per cent, the Council said a speed-up in production to meet the emergency "has driven into operation the moment defense orders began."

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BARBERS CONVENTION OPENS ON SEPT. 15

Indianapolis, Ind.—Official notice that the 18th annual convention of the Journeymen Barbers' International Union of America will be held in Indianapolis, Ind., beginning September 15, was issued by the International Union headquarters here.

Approximately 1,200 delegates will be in attendance, including boardmen and delegates affiliated with the Hairdressers and Cosmetologists' Department of the organization.

Convention headquarters will be in the Claypool Hotel, with business sessions in the Tomlinson Hall. Plans and organization will be among topics for consideration.

William C. Birchright is general president and general secretary-treasurer of the union. Other members of the General Executive Board are Vice-Presidents C. E. Herrett, Vancouver, B. C.; Harold Reagan, Rochester, N. Y.; Anthony Merlino, New Haven, Conn.; Frank Bango, Chicago, Ill.; John J. Lloyd, Norfolk, Va.; Frank W. Weibel, Pittsburgh, Pa.; Arizona Clifton Norrell, Omaha, Neb.; George E. McKenna, Springfield, O.; John B. Robinson, Dallas, Tex.; Jerry Hanks, St. Louis, Mo.; Harold L. Eischen, Minneapolis, Minn.

Mr. Birchright is a member of the General Executive Board of the American Federation of Labor.

The union was organized in 1887 and has been affiliated with the A. F. of L. since 1888.

YOUTH ADMINISTRATION ALLOCATES $21,088,125

Washington, D. C.—Allocation of $21,088,125 among 48 states, New York City, the District of Columbia, Alaska, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands, for operation of the NYA student work program during the 1941-42 academic year was announced by Aubrey Williams, Administrator of the National Youth Administration.

Secondary school students will earn between $6 and $6 a month, while undergraduates will earn between $10 and $20 a month, and graduate students will earn between $10 and $20 a month. Individual earnings will vary according to the number of hours worked and hourly rates of pay in the locality.